Her education includes a B.A. in biology at St. Olaf College, a J.D. at William Mitchell College of Law, and a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Minnesota. She is a 2001 graduate of the NAB Educational Foundation's Broadcast Leadership Training Program.

Sylvia is currently serving as interim president of American Women in Radio and Television, and will return to her position as chair of the AWRT national board of directors in March.

MS. STROBEL: Thank you. On behalf of American Women in Radio and Television, I want to thank you for inviting us to participate in this workshop today.

My name is Sylvia Strobel, and I am the interim president of AWRT. Prior to stepping into this role in October, I was a member of the National Board of Directors of AWRT for eight years, and most recently served as Chair.

AWRT is proud of its 59-year history.

It was formed in 1951 as a successor to the National Association of Broadcasters Women's Division. NAB approved the new organization, offering complete cooperation and assistance.

The following year, more than 280 women gathered to celebrate and approve the structure of AWRT. We have grown our membership immensely since its founding, and we have 19 professional chapters throughout the United States. Our members are quite diverse in age, work experience and job duties. AWRT local chapters provide members with a local forum for personal and professional development, and enhanced leadership, public speaking, and group decision-making skills.

The mission of AWRT is to advance the interests of women in media and allied fields by educating, advocating and acting as a resource to our members, the industry, and the public at large. One of our key goals is to promote the entry, development, advancement, and retention of women in the media industry.

AWRT continues to evolve to meet the

needs of its members in a changing media landscape, and serves as a partner, resource, and educational service provider to the media industry at large. Ongoing initiatives include government and regulatory advocacy, employment information services, professional development programs, and industry updates.

Two new initiatives undertaken by AWRT headquarters over the last few years include a new student chapter program and a mentoring program. Both are geared to increasing the number of women entering the media industry, as well as providing career advancement opportunities.

AWRT currently has eight student chapters, with several more student chapters in development. Our student chapters include Georgia State, Spellman College, George Washington University, Lyndon State, Howard University, Montclair State University, Penn State University, and Central Michigan University.

Our student members are recognized through our annual Gracie awards, and offered scholarships to attend AWRT education events, like our annual Women's Media Forum, which is held here in D.C. every March.

Where possible, students are paired with professional AWRT chapters and/or members for additional career development guidance.

AWRT's mentorship program was developed nearly four years ago to pair senior-level AWRT members in the media industry with emerging professionals. Mentoring is a powerful tool that is critical to the advancement of women, as well as to the success of the broadcast companies and the media industry as a whole. Not only does it play a significant role in the development of an individual's career, it helps companies enhance the skills of their employees and diversity of their workplace.

AWRT's student chapter program and membership program are critical if we are to provide meaningful employment and advancement opportunities for women in the media industry.

Furthermore, the number of women in

management or ownership in the media industry is still small. And programs like those offered by AWRT can provide a direct link to increase the number of women in executive roles, serving on corporate boards, and owning media companies.

We have all seen the dismal numbers: Too few women hold senior management positions in broadcast companies, and only 5 percent of television stations and 6 percent of radio stations are owned by women.

Few women serve on the boards of Fortune 500 media companies, or hold the position of CEO. When drilling down to mid-sized companies, the number of women holding leadership or ownership positions is still relatively small.

It is difficult to reconcile these numbers when realizing than more women than men have been graduating with bachelor's degrees since the 1980s, which reflects most of the workforce under the age of 50.

AWRT will continue to advocate on behalf of its membership in the media industry to change these facts and figures, and increase opportunities for women through proactive, productive, and measurable programs and incentives.

We are pleased to be invited to participate in the workshop and provide our suggestions and recommendations for improving the opportunities for women in the media industry.

We would ask that the FCC weigh changes to the current media ownership rules that take into account any disparate impact of such change on women's ability to purchase stations and/or be a part of the purchasing station's senior management teams.

Where possible, we also respectfully request that women's access to capital to purchase stations be thoroughly reviewed, with the understanding that the majority of station purchases, including stations in small markets and rural areas, generally exceed SBA-guaranteed loan amounts, and are not well received by local or regional lenders or investors, who have little experience evaluating broadcast properties.

We realize that the current economy and evolution of digital technology has had a profound impact on the broadcast industry, and that any changes made to the media ownership rules must account for many factors.

AWRT certainly does not promote changes that hinder the broadcasting industry's ability to evolve, compete, and continue to provide key services -- particularly to local markets. However, we do recommend due diligence research and, where possible, specific programs that provide resources and financing options for women seeking to advance in the media industry, or invest in media properties.

AWRT is willing and able to provide assistance, research, outreach, and training in support of the FCC's work in this regard.

Thank you.

MR. REED: Well, thank you all for your comments. And thank you again for being here to lend us your expertise.

I'd sort of like to start it off. I think we're going to be getting questions from the audience, and I believe we'll get questions from the Internet, as well.

But let me start it off with something that you've all alluded to.

Yesterday we held a workshop here, a roundtable discussion on broadband strategies for minority radio. And one of the consensus opinions was that, in effect, there's a perfect storm here for minorities in broadcasting -- the recessionary market, as you referred to, the aftereffects of consolidation, multi-platform competition -- the exodus of ad dollars to Internet media outlets, and, as Michael alluded to, the cost of the DTV transition.

All of those factors have really hammered at minority broadcasters. So my first question is in that context.

Looking at our media ownership rules -- the current media ownership rules -- what effect do those rules have on minority and female ownership in broadcasting?

And I'll just put that out to the panel. Or, as Jake did in the prior panel, we'll start first with you, Faith.

MS. BAUTISTA: I'm going to have to change my last name to Zautista.

No, obviously we will not have this hearing if the rules were favorable. I, as a minority, you know, immigrant, for us to watch our -- the news in the Philippines, we have to pay $79 a month to get that cable. And for us to even be part of the media, we've got to be part of, you know, a big media like Verizon, which they require so much requirements. So therefore, it's only the last four years, actually, that the Filipino Channel has been out in the United States. And the other media, which is the GMA, it's only been last year.

And, you know, there are 4 million Filipinos in the United States who want to see the news in the Philippines, cannot even have that access until they pay so much the cable.

With the crisis right now, you know, the foreclosure crisis, it's so funny that we do foreclosure prevention counseling, and the last budget they will remove is the cable because that is very important to them, you know. That is their stress reliever from all the crises that they have, even they lost their job. And that's just, you know, "I'd rather lose my manicure, pedicure, don't take that cable away from me."

So I'm just really hoping -- and this is why I got involved, really, with the FCC -- is how can we increase that ownership?

And I mentioned I've been involved in the supplier diversity. And I think if FCC can start the supplier diversity, in two years, four years from now, eventually there will be an increase of ownership.

I'm always in favor of the first-year, second-year supplier. The reason why I mentioned some of the utility companies' success is because the California Public Utilities Commission, the president (inaudible) made it part of their DNA that supplier diversity has got to be part of corporate responsibility. So, therefore, business ownership starts to flourish from there.

If FCC can do the same things -- I mean, I'm more on the result-oriented, and I'm here speaking as a grassroots, speaking really for the small businesses -- especially the women of color. There is really no chance, or little chance for them to gain access to these resources.

MR. REED: Others have a reaction? Sylvia?

MS. STROBEL: We all know that the number of women and minorities owning stations is very small. So, clearly, whatever we've been doing has not been working.

But the question I had when I was thinking through this, in preparation for this workshop -- is it the current rules? Or is it the business practices that need to change?

We can relax the rules, we can tighten the rules, we can keep them as is. I'm not sure that's really going to solve the problem of women and minorities' buying stations, or moving into senior management ranks, unless we actually look at coming up with some solutions and recommendations for changing the business practices that currently exist.

MR. ROBERTS: I'm going to comment. I'm going to use an experience.

When we were in the auction to buy the last couple of TV stations we bought, within 10 years ago -- there's an attribution rule. Because I served on a board of a publicly-held company that owned about 11 stations, you had a rule that said, "We can give you a 25 percent discount on your bid if you are a minority," or whatever your definition at the time was. It seems to have always been a moving target, "designated entity," I don't know what we are today based on your changing terms. But at the time, you allowed that.

Well, we owned two TV stations, and the requirement was arbitrarily three. And if you owned more than two, you would not be eligible for that 25 percent discount in the auction.

Well, we started the auction and, because I was a board member, I was attributed to having 11 stations. So I had to resign from that position.

But the timing of my resignation came subsequent to the beginning of the bidding process. So even though I was not on the board at the time we won and it was time for us to be determined the owner, the competing entity decided that they were going to challenge the rule. And you guys punted on me. And basically, instead of getting that 25 percent discount, which was over $2 million to work with us, you suggested that I just define myself as if I owned three stations at the time, and I wasn't any longer eligible. And then I had to write that extra $2 million check in order to get it. And I did it.

But I felt that you turned your backs on the opportunity to make sure that African-Americans would have owned stations in some very unique markets -- specifically, Jackson, Mississippi, and Columbia, South Carolina.

But we prevailed, we went on. We paid up. And as a result, you know, we're on the air now.

So I'm going to suggest that from time to time, that you put your money where your mouth is. That you, in fact, get out here and do the best you can to help those of us who are trying to make it work.

And, you know, I was a former alderman. And in the political world there's an old phrase, "To our enemies, we follow the rules. To our friends, we'll do anything necessary."

And I'm going to suggest that you start looking more closely at yourself to determine where your rules are, and what you can do to interpret them to help us succeed in the future.

MR. REED: David? Do you have --

MR. HONIG: There is so much that the Commission can complain about but can't do anything about. It can't do much about the economy -- at least directly. It can't do much about competition from other platforms -- at least directly.

But there is no shortage of pending proposals gathering dust at this agency for years and sometimes decades that the Commission just let sit and sit and sit. Due process is never afforded. They are never dusted off. And many of them are now foregone opportunities.

I could give you over two dozen examples. I just want to pick a few.

The Commission adopted EEO rules in 1971, stopped enforcing them about nine years ago, has had a slew of proposals about how it could begin to do that, and has done nothing. EEO rules are vital to minority ownership because that's where the talent pool comes from.

We now have a situation with AM journalism. RTNDA has studied this. We've looked at their data. We pointed out a couple years ago -- and are still waiting for action on this -- that the percentage of minorities in radio journalism, English-language radio journalism now, if you tease that out of RTNDA's figures, is less than 1 percent. It's where it was in 1950. There's been a purge. A purge. And the Commission has done nothing.

The Commission adopted its advertising non-discrimination rule, it took us 24 years to get that. In 2007 to this day, it doesn't have anyone on the staff to enforce it. That's more than two years after it adopted the rule.

This is a process that is a 5 to 10 percent hit every year on minority broadcasters who earn money and never get to collect it.

It's obscene, people. Just give a few other examples. The tax certificate policy was repealed by Congress in 2005. Every year, the Commission sends a polite letter to Congress saying it would be nice to have it back. It's common wisdom. No one opposes it.

Why haven't the Commission's legislative people gone up to the Ways and Means Committee and just camped out and insisted, "This is vital if we're going to have this important industry survive and be diverse." This should not be hard.

Why is the performance tax sitting out there as a potential hit on minority radio especially, small radio especially, and the Commission's legislative office has said nothing. This is something that could cost minority broadcasters $100- or $200 million a year, depending on who's counting.

And the proposals the Diversity Committee has put before it. It started in 2003, 44 proposals are pending. MMTC and the Diversity in Competition supporters, 31 organizations have -- God, I've lost count -- it's, I think, 28 or 29 pending proposals before the agency. There is some overlap.

Just one example I mentioned earlier. The idea of having around-the-edges waivers for incubator programs -- which ought to be not controversial. It's about as conservative as you get. Give someone something else. It's a win-win -- in exchange for them doing something for the public interest.

That was proposed in 1990, and it's still sitting there.

Now, that's not the fault of any one person. It's institutional failure, because this is not a priority.

And, boy, did it get solemn here when I said that. Because we all know it's true. And yet we wake up tomorrow, and nothing's going to be done about.

What do we have to do? Picket the building? I mean, this is -- it's obscene, people. And it's about time someone said what it is.

MR. REED: Okay. Well, it seems like we've gotten a couple ideas here -- institutional inaction. And some factors related to perhaps a proposal for behavioral changes in the rules.

Professor Angela Campbell -- just getting back to the rules for a second -- said quite candidly in the prior panel that her recommendation was for tightening of the ownership rules rather than relaxing them. And getting back to what impact, you know, the rules have on women and minority-owned businesses.

That specific question -- what's your opinion of whether the rules should be tightened or relaxed?

MR. HONIG: I'll take that one. We have to be aware of unintended consequences.

MR. REED: Hmm.

MR. HONIG: There are some rules which could be tightened without having the financial markets go crazy. You know, it sometimes is said that, you know, when corporate America catches a cold, corporate minority America gets the flu. So we have to be very careful that people who write checks don't just decide to go in the widget business tomorrow because the expectations that they have, and their business plans that were based on Commission rules suddenly get thrown out the window.

If the Commission, for example, decided we're not going to have eight-year renewals, we're going to have three-year renewals, that wouldn't be a bad idea. That wouldn't hurt the financial markets that much.

If it said, "We're going to stop deregulating and freeze what we have, and work around the edges," that probably wouldn't have much effect on the financial markets or on the availability of capital.

If it suddenly started to require massive divestitures, that would have a short-run positive impact for those who got some of the divestitures, but it would have a greater negative impact, based on money leaving the business. You'd have 100 percent of nothing, in effect.

So we have to be cautious about where -- and really use careful economic analysis in deciding what, if any, rules can be rolled back that relate to ownership structure. It's very difficult, once you deregulate, to later re-regulate ownership rules, which is another reason just to be very careful before you have deregulation at all.

MR. REED: Anyone else?

MS. STROBEL: I would just say, I agree with David 100 percent. I think the more data that we can collect through this process, the better. I think we heard from the prior panel, and some of us on this panel, were talking about the fact of the lack of data and real measurements on the impacts of some these ownership rules.

But I think the thing that we all agree on is we don't want to take action and have it negatively impact the broadcasting industry so that it can no longer compete. That's not going to help women or minorities buy stations, and it's going to result in a lot of job loss among our colleagues.

MR. REED: Sylvia, you said earlier -- and correct me if I'm mistaken in quoting you -- essentially you talked about business practices. And we're talking about ownership structure, but it seems that you were alluding to the fact that maybe behavioral changes in the rules would be more effective.

Can you elaborate on that?

MS. STROBEL: Yes. I mean, I think Michael brought up one really good example. And that probably gets more at some of the rules than anything.

But I know David has mentioned this, too -- creating some incentives that change the behavior of companies, particularly media companies and broadcasters, so that they have more incentive to invest in or provide resources to women and minorities who are looking to buy stations. I know there are some examples out there of some creative financing that's going on to assist women and minorities buy stations. But we need to see a lot more of this.

And in the current economic environment it's very difficult for most of the large stations to get the financing they need right now to just maintain operations. It's virtually impossible for a new entrant to get the financing.

So the more incentives we can create to change behavior, and change current business practices so that it promotes women and minorities owning stations, owning a percentage of a station -- it may not be 51 percent, but having some kind of ownership and management authority of a station, I think the better. That's how we're going to get from where we are to where we need to be.

MR. ROBERTS: I agree with you. You know, basically, we're trying to create a voice to the community. I mean, that's really what it's all about. It's a visual and it's an audio voice to the community that delivers entertainment, news, et cetera.

Now, one of the questions that I would ask of you is to consider perhaps changing your foreign ownership rules. You know, frankly, if you look at who might take an interest in investing in our community, it won't be just the special-interest Australian that you allowed to have this happen to, but maybe people from China and the Philippines and some other places that have emerging large capital funds which, in fact -- I mean, at some point, if they become citizens here, then we have that opportunity and we're ahead of the game.

That might be one of our financing sources. I mean, we know that there are some challenges out here with the banks. We understand that. There isn't that much we can do about it.

But if you allowed for that ownership rule to be expanded slightly from a -- foreign ownership rule to be expanded, perhaps that may be yet another option that we could place on the table for financing and, frankly, minority ownership as we will define it in the future.

MR. REED: David?

MR. HONIG: I want to underscore two very important points that Mike Roberts has made.

On the subject of foreign ownership, you know, we don't have those -- the Commission has authority to decide case by case that the public interest is served, or someone has more than 25 percent foreign ownership. That's what 3.10(b)(4) says. And it's been done once in the case of this gentleman, in the case that I lost in 1995. I'm old enough.

And I've realized that I kind of was on the wrong side of that case. I'll admit it. Because of the possibility that sources of capital unavailable or uninterested in this country might be interested elsewhere, especially from South America, from Spain, from Mexico, from the Philippines, from Japan. And that would be a great thing.

We proposed, as did a large coalition of organizations, that the Commission change its foreign ownership rules to make them commensurate with the way it handles foreign ownerships in the common carrier space, and in the cable space.

And the Commission, in a couple sentences, in the last deregulation order, denied that request. We have it on reconsideration, and it has been sitting there on reconsideration for almost two years. And this is one of the three or four most significant things the Commission could do to jump-start access to capital for minorities in this business. And it's just sitting there.